

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Amended) A communication system ~~network~~ comprising:

a signaling processing system configured to receive signaling identifying a first connection for a call, process the signaling to select an identifier and a second connection, transfer a first message indicating the first connection and the identifier, and transfer a second message indicating the identifier and the second connection;

a first interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ configured to receive user communications for the call and the first message, interwork the user communications into asynchronous communications including the identifier in response to the first message, and transfer the asynchronous communications ~~based on the identifier~~;

an optical network configured to receive the asynchronous communications from the first interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ and transfer the asynchronous communications over an optical network ~~ring~~; and

a second interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ configured to receive the asynchronous communications from the optical network and the second message, interwork the asynchronous communications into the user communications based on the identifier, and transfer the user ~~asynchronous~~ communications over the second connection in response to the second message.

2. (Amended) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the identifier identifies an asynchronous connection provisioned from the first interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ through the optical network to the second interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ before the call.

3. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the optical network comprises a metropolitan area network.

4. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the first connection is coupled to a first local network and the second connection is coupled to a second local network.
5. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the first connection is coupled to a local network and the second connection is coupled to an interexchange network.
6. (Amended) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the first connection is coupled to a local network and the second connection is coupled to an international carrier network.
7. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling comprises Signaling System 7 signaling.
8. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling comprises an initial address message.
9. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to process a called number from the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection.
10. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to process a caller number from the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection.
11. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to process the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection to provide local number portability.

12. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to process the signaling to access a service control point to select the identifier and the second connection.

13. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to generate billing information for the call.

14. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 wherein the signaling processing system is configured to receive and process address complete, answer, and release messages for the call.

15. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 further comprising a service platform configured to receive and process the user communications from the second connection to provide voice messaging.

16. (Original) The communication system of claim 1 further comprising a service platform configured to receive and process the user communications from the second connection to provide tone detection.

17. (Amended) A method for communicating over networks, the method comprising:

- receiving signaling identifying a first connection for a call into a signaling processing system;
- in the signaling processing system, processing the signaling to select an identifier and a second connection;
- transferring a first message indicating the first connection and the identifier from the signaling processing system to a first interworking unit asynchronous communication system;
- transferring a second message indicating the identifier and the second connection from the signaling processing system to a second interworking unit asynchronous communication system;
- receiving user communications for the call and the first message into the first interworking unit asynchronous communication system;
- in the first interworking unit asynchronous communication system, interworking the user communications into asynchronous communications including the identifier in response to the first message,
- transferring the asynchronous communications including based on the identifier from the first interworking unit asynchronous communication system to an optical network;
- receiving the asynchronous communications from the first interworking unit asynchronous communication system into the optical network;
- transferring the asynchronous communications over the optical network ring;
- receiving the asynchronous communications from the optical network and the second message into the second interworking unit asynchronous communication system;
- in the second interworking unit asynchronous communication system, interworking the asynchronous communications into the user communications based on the identifier;
- and
- transferring the asynchronous communications over the second connection from the second interworking unit asynchronous communication system in response to the second message.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the identifier identifies an asynchronous connection provisioned from the first interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ through the optical network to the second interworking unit ~~asynchronous communication system~~ before the call.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the optical network comprises a metropolitan area network.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the first connection is coupled to a first local network and the second connection is coupled to a second local network.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the first connection is coupled to a local network and the second connection is coupled to an interexchange network.

22. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the first connection is coupled to a local network and the second connection is coupled to an international carrier ~~network~~.

23. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the signaling comprises Signaling System 7 signaling.

24. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the signaling comprises an initial address message.

25. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, processing a called number from the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection.

26. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, processing a caller number from the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection.

27. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, processing the signaling to select the identifier and the second connection to provide local number portability.

28. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, processing the signaling to access a service control point to select the identifier and the second connection.

29. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, generating billing information for the call.

30. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the signaling processing system, receiving and processing address complete, answer, and release messages for the call.

31. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the service platform, receiving and processing the user communications from the second connection to provide voice messaging.

32. (Original) The method of claim 17 further comprising in the service platform, receiving and processing the user communications from the second connection to provide tone detection.